

TREASURE

OUR

rhode island

COASTS

and

ESTUARIES

RHODE ISLAND'S DIVERSE COASTAL ZONE INCLUDES BOTH TIDAL AND COASTAL POND WATERS, BEACHES, COASTAL WETLANDS, ROCKY SHORES, AND DUNES. MAJOR INDUSTRIES THAT DEPEND ON THESE AREAS INCLUDE COMMERCIAL FISHING, CARGO SHIPPING, AND TOURISM. SIGNIFICANT COASTAL ISSUES INCLUDE BEACH EROSION, HARBOR MANAGEMENT, DREDGING AND DREDGED MATERIAL DISPOSAL, AND PUBLIC ACCESS. THE COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT ACT (CZMA) PROVIDES THE FRAMEWORK NECESSARY TO SUSTAIN THE ECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL VALUE OF RHODE ISLAND'S COASTAL AREAS. THIS LAW, WHICH IS ADMINISTERED BY THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA), RECOGNIZES A NATIONAL INTEREST IN OUR COASTAL AND OCEAN AREAS. IT ALLOWS STATES AND TERRITORIES, NOT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, TO DETERMINE HOW BEST TO BALANCE CONSERVATION OF THE COASTAL ENVIRONMENT WITH HUMAN USES THAT DEPEND ON COASTAL RESOURCES.

miles of coastline
384

coastal population in 2000
1,048,319

fy03 czma core (section 306)
funding
\$1,638,000

fy03 czma enhancements
(section 309) funding
\$107,000

fy03 coastal nonpoint
implementation
\$245,000

fy03 national estuarine research
reserve operations, education,
monitoring and stewardship
\$555,000

fy03 national estuarine research
reserve land acquisition/
construction
\$468,000

THE CZMA IN RHODE ISLAND

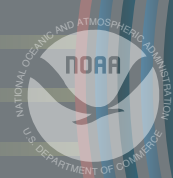
The CZMA establishes two programs to balance the use and protection of America's coasts. The Coastal Management Program gives states a flexible framework to address a broad range of community development, economic, and natural resource issues at the state and local level. The National Estuarine Research Reserve System protects key coastal areas for long-term scientific study, education, and resource stewardship.

Rhode Island Coastal Management Program

Approved: 1978

Lead Agency: Coastal Resources Management Council

Rhode Island's coastal program establishes a comprehensive program for managing coastal resources, primarily at the state level. Created in 1971 in one of the earliest pieces of state coastal management legislation, the Coastal Resources Management Council is empowered with planning, policy, permitting, enforcement, and coordination responsibilities; as well as issue identification and policy development for all uses affecting the coastal zone—including



federal activities through the Federal Consistency process. The Coastal Resources Management Council collaborates with other state agencies, such as the Department of Environmental Management, the Office of Administration Division of Planning, the University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center, and the Historic Preservation Commission, in various aspects of coastal management.

The Coastal Resources Management Council's accomplishments include:

- *planning for the management of special areas. Rhode Island has long been a national leader in Special Area Management Planning. Since 1983, the Council has developed and implemented four Special Area Management Plans that address unique areas of the state and their particular management needs. These areas are: the salt ponds of Rhode Island's south shore; the Narrow River estuary; the Pawcatuck River and Little Narragansett Bay (an interstate plan with Connecticut); and Providence Harbor. In addition, the Council is developing a Special Area Management plan for Greenwich Bay.*
- *leading an effort to address needed dredging in an environmentally sound manner after a 25-year hiatus. The Coastal Resources Management Council is the designated lead agency for coordination of dredging and dredged disposal issues in the state; and for development and implementation of a state dredging policy, regulatory framework, and statewide dredging and disposal plan.*
- *becoming the second state to achieve full federal approval of its Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program in April 2001. In many areas, Rhode Island set the standard for other states to meet in addressing coastal nonpoint program conditions. The state has developed strong programs to address stormwater runoff, manage septic systems and water quality impacts from marinas.*
- *receiving designation as the lead agency for coastal habitat restoration and for aquaculture planning, research, and development.*

Rhode Island's National Estuarine Research Reserve Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Designation: 1980

Lead Agency: Department of Environmental Management

The Narragansett Bay Reserve is one of a national network of coastal protected areas that conducts science, education, and resource stewardship. The reserve system is a partnership between NOAA and the states.

Located in the geographic center of Narragansett Bay, the reserve encompasses 2,353 acres of land on Prudence, Patience and Hope islands and 1,591 acres of water adjoining the islands out to a depth of 18 feet. In addition to its human inhabitants, Prudence Island supports one of the densest herds of white tailed deer in the northeast. The public cannot visit the uninhabited Hope Island during the summer because it is a major rookery for colonial nesting wading birds. Reserve facilities include a residence for visiting scientists, a naturalists' kiosk and a field station with a learning center, research lab and reserve offices. The reserve partners with the Audubon Society of Rhode Island and the Prudence Conservancy to provide educational and volunteer opportunities

PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

The Coastal Resources Management Council, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and Save the Bay recently joined forces to develop a coast-wide habitat restoration plan and associated information system. The plan and information system will help prioritize restoration projects and land purchases, provide needed decisionmaking tools, and build public and legislative support for stewardship and restoration of the state's coastal habitats. The state has secured a competitive grant for \$270,000 from the NOAA Coastal Services Center to assist in these efforts.